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The Messageries Maritimes steamer *Kongki*, with ...
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FAMILY AND DISPENSING
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The Missionaries in China, both Protestant and Catholic, have done their duty nobly in administering the relief subscribed for by foreigners here and in Europe. The work has been arduous, painful, and sometimes dangerous. It has been prosecuted with a zeal, discrimination, and devotion which reflect the highest credit upon the disinterested distributors. Two gentlemen have fallen victims to disease caught whilst ministering to the sufferings of the famine-stricken people. DR. CAMPBELL last year at Chiao, and the Rev. ALBERT WERTING this year at Tai Yuen-fai. Disease is slaying its thousands in the famine districts, and those who venture there for their lives. But this fact will not, we are satisfied, deter others from undertaking the work.

The political situation in Europe continues extremely uncertain. The general opinion prevailing is represented by Reuter as being in favour of the maintenance of peace, but as this has been the desire of the majority all along, it is no proof that the difficulties in the way of an amicable solution of the Eastern Question are likely to be removed. Of course, if both England and Russia are animated by a strong wish to avoid an appeal to arms, the path can be smoothed very considerably for the meeting of the proposed European Congress. Count Schorbatoff has evidently returned to London charged with some new and special proposal to the British Government, which, possibly, a settlement of the points at issue between the two countries may be arrived at. It is manifestly the interest of Russia to remain on good terms with England, both to avert the financial ruin which is impending over her and to retain some of the results of her victories over the Turks. What renders it so very difficult for England to come to an understanding with Russia is the profound conviction everywhere felt—and strengthened by recent events—that the Czar's Government is not to be trusted. Such glaring evidences of Muscovite treachery and bad faith have during the past half century been given to the world that it is now felt too truly can hardly Russia, no dependence be placed on her promises. If a long and disastrous European war does break out it will be solely due to the tergiversation and aggressiveness of Russian statesmen. But we trust that at the eleventh hour the Russian Government will see the folly of trying in the face of Europe and commencing a new war without a shadow of justification, and with no prospect of success. As the German Press have pointed out to her, Russia cannot bear the strain of a three years' campaign, while England would, comparatively speaking, suffer no more damage than a man from a cut finger. What would be commercial ruin to Russia would be a mere inconvenience to England. At the same time, the latter country desires to avoid war, not for the cost or risks it would entail, but merely because she dislikes the thought of bloodshed when any other course is open. The present state of uncertainty appears likely to be prolonged for some weeks, though an unexpected termination may be put to it. It would be a great satisfaction for all engaged in trade to know the worst or best at once.

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